



# Can You Teach Diversity?

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AN EXERCISE IN EDUCATION AND EMPOWERMENT VIA SERVICE LEARNING

# Today's Audience: What is Your Learning Goal?

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- Take my in-person Service Learning course online
- Improve the Service Learning course that I already teach online
- Offer a diversity component to my existing class
- Other (share in the chat box)

# Today's Audience: Your Experience with SL

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- Have you taught a Service Learning course in-person before? (I think I probably know the answer...)
- Have you taught a Service Learning course online before?

# My SL Background:

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**I began using Service Learning pedagogy in 2008, and I continued until my class was discontinued in 2018. I took a couple of years off from Service Learning, but still wrote about the benefits of Service Learning.**

**I returned to Service Learning with the Fall 2020 semester in a different course with different challenges.**



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# Online Service Learning

# My Online SL Background:

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- In my initial online Service Learning class, I divided my students into two sections
- One half of the class worked with a local community partner, and one half of the class worked with a distant community partner.

# My Online SL Background:

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- Related assignments were submitted in-person, but the online groups' presentations to their distant partners were via Skype, and all communication between the online groups and their partners was electronic/virtual (emails, texts, social media, phone calls).

# Other Online SL Formats

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- You can choose to have the service take place in the physical community (if COVID-19 restrictions are not issue), and have students log their time, post assignments, share discussions, and complete reflection work in an entirely online format.



# Other Online SL Formats

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- You can also choose to use online Service Learning with a Study Abroad program, and have students log their time, post assignments, share discussions, and complete reflection work in an entirely online format.

# Audience Poll:

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**How many of you have worked with any of the previously-listed online formats?**

**(You may respond verbally/via the chat function on Zoom)**



# Online Service Learning

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# Why It Works

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- **Students are digital natives and comfortable operating in a virtual setting**
- **The Learning Management System allows for you to organize information and lessons efficiently**

# Why It Works

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- **The online format is inclusive for working students and students who might have difficulties accessing remote Service Learning locations**
- **The immediacy of the service provides students with agency and a sense of community even when things are constricted due to Covid**

# Rapid Changes in the Air

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- In Spring 2020, my on-ground, in-classroom diversity course was disrupted by Covid-19 and we went exclusively online
- The course, Values, Ethics and Diversity in American Popular Culture, had never been online before

# Rapid Changes in the Air

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- We all worked together to continue the course, with narrated Power Point lectures, discussion boards, and Zoom meetings to discuss assignments, but I saw a marked change in the students

# Fall 2020

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- **The Fall 2020 version of the class presented numerous challenges.**



# A Challenging Situation



**A Virtual Learning Environment**



**Disengaged and Disappointed Students**



**A Need for a Conversation on Diversity**

# **We Needed a Reboot**

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- **So, the lectures went from Power Points to Zoom, and the emphasis was on a diversity Service Learning project**
- **The students would create education video presentations about issues in diversity**

# Audience Poll:

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- How many people have drafted a formal diversity statement?

(You may respond verbally/via the chat function on Zoom)

# Diversity

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**Diversity is an ideological stance, and for purposes of this course, diversity includes equal recognition of and respect for diversity regarding race, gender/gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, physical ability, socio-economics and related social hierarchy, religion, and social or cultural belief systems.**

# Getting Comfortable

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**We start with “ice breakers” on the discussion board.**

**Example:**

Suppose you were told you could only have or use 3 items to communicate your identity in the world. What would those 3 items be? Why those items?

# Getting Comfortable

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**I also tried to introduce creativity by asking students to create narratives from the following slide images:**

# Image

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Did Cinderella  
lose her  
pumpkin  
carriage?



# Image

**Beautiful...but  
a little scary?**





# Image

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## What?!...



# Image

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## Where?!...





# Image

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## Laughter and dogs



# Getting Comfortable (cont'd.)

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**How many in attendance today have used ice breakers in an online situation?**

**(You may respond verbally/via the chat function on Zoom)**



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# The Online Service Learning Project

# The Project

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- **The Presentation:**

- Must provide a fact-checked Power Point or vlog about the topic
- Must be under 10 minutes
- Fact-checking involves use of academic sources in locating your information and must be vetted by approved academic sources

# The Project

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- You may work with a partner or in a group, but each group can only have a maximum of four members
- Must be “both entertaining and educational”

# The Diversity Topics

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- I created a list of diversity topics for students to consider for their projects based on current events or for use during Black History Month, Women's History Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, etc.



# The Project: What Worked

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- The students were ready to discuss the issues that made them angry, concerned, frustrated, and inspired. They wanted self-expression and a community voice.

# Audience Poll

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- If you are a faculty member, how many of you had students in a class introduce the events from last summer in your classes?

# The Project: What Worked

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- They were also without direction in the online/on-ground reality of my campus, concerned at times about the spike in Covid-19 numbers, and they needed focus in an uncertain world.
- The project provided the focus.

# The Project

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- I gave them the option to choose a group or be placed in a group. I used the D2L option in the Communication section of the shell to create separate spaces for each group to privately share/communicate within D2L.

# The Project

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- Some used the D2L groups, while others created their own Google groups, or communicated via Zoom or through texting. No group mentioned social media such as Facebook or Twitter.

# The Project

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- From September through November, we communicated via email, Zoom, and worked together. I met with each group separately using Zoom, because some students could only meet around work schedules. The class met through Zoom on Tuesdays, and Discussion Boards were used on Thursdays.

# The Project

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- It was a difficult process at times. I would lecture on Tuesdays, and in the last few minutes of the class, ask how their projects were going. Any problems meant that we would be “Zooming” to talk about the problems.

# The Project: What Did Not Work

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- A couple of groups splintered, only to re-organize as new groups. Three students chose to work alone, and 2 of the 3 chose to do so because their diversity topic was of personal interest and they wanted to create their project alone.



# The Project

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- We needed a repository for their work, so I found the educational side of Weebly that does not charge educators for the creation of a website.

# The Project

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- I began creating an “About” page, as well as other pages for definition of terms attached to diversity studies and a Reflection page. My assigned Graduate Assistant was prepared to help me when I needed her.

# The Project

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- I would show her the website construction project each week, and she provided feedback, since I was immersed in the construction.

# The Project

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- At the end of the semester, the students presented their work to each other, and they saw the site. They were proud of their work, as they revealed in their Reflection papers.

# The Project

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- We are now doing the Service Learning project again this Spring 2021 semester; so far things are progressing according to schedule.

# Our Final Result

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<http://apsuvaluesethicsanddiversity.weebly.com/>



# Questions and Discussion